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ABSTRACT

International education encompasses: (1) the international content of curricula; (2) the international movement of scholars and students concerned with training and research; and (3) the arrangements engaging United States education abroad in technical assistance and educational cooperation programs. Its purposes are to liberate the mind and to eliminate ethocentrism and parochialism. It is an integral part of quality education. All colleges and universities should examine their policy toward international education. (Author/KE)

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The International Responsibility of Higher Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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The following policy statement was adopted by the AASCU membership during its 15th Annual Meeting, November, 1975, Boston, Massachusetts.

The Implications of Interdependence

Institutions of higher learning which claim to offer an education appropriate to the highly interdependent world of today must seriously examine, plan and implement their international role in the curriculum and other programs. It therefore has become urgent and necessary to attempt to clarify the set of obligations and opportunities that are basic to the fulfillment of the international responsibilities of higher education.

The Process and Its Semantics

There is much confusion about programs labeled as international education. For some, international education is equated with the academic and cultural experience of students spending a semester or a year in a foreign culture. For others it is the teaching of international relations or area studies on campus. For yet others it might be the involvement of a group of scholars and administrators in the educational development of other countries. Still others have broader conceptions involving the introduction of students and faculty to transnational institutions and processes. All of these activities and many others are but fragments of the broader and vital process of international education. A process which spells out significant values and commitments. A process whose total impact is long-term and much broader than that of the sum of its parts.

"International Education" encompasses:

- (a) the international content of curricula;
- (b) the international movement of scholars and students concerned with training and research; and,
- (c) the arrangements engaging United States education abroad in technical assistance and educational cooperation programs.

The terminology "international-intercultural" is used to indicate:

- (a) that intercultural education is the larger concept that embraces international as well as domestic educational experience; and,
- (b) that intercultural experience acquired within a nation-state can be invaluable in dealing across national boundaries.

The Purpose of International Education

The globalization of education should not be on the fringe of the curriculum, "the frosting on the cake." Rather, it must be institutionalized as an integral part of the pedagogical philosophy of the institution and its curriculum. There

is no student presently in college who should be exempted from acquiring some sensitivity to the existence, diversity, and dynamic inter-relationship of the many cultures in our world society. At graduate and professional levels, there is scarcely a field of knowledge that can be isolated from global issues and the pursuit of their solution. Major areas of training, research, and applied fields can hardly ignore the multinational dimension. The stark realities confronting us are that our existing international economic and political relationships need rethinking. Successful United States educational and cultural interactions with other countries are essential to the long term contribution of the United States to world peace and to the world wide improvement in the "condition" of man.

It often has been said that the purpose of a liberal arts education is to liberate the mind. It may be added that within that general purpose, international education has the specific objective of combatting ethnocentrism and parochialism. A multitude of programs and diverse approaches can be designed to eliminate ethnocentrism and parochialism, the existence of which in a person is the very antithesis of quality education.

Graduate and professional training require a varying degree of immersion in matters international, depending on the field. However, it is safe to assert that:

- (a) every graduate or professional person has much to gain from exchanges and contacts with colleagues in other societies; and,
- (b) global issues such as hunger, population, pollution, war and peace will require addressing by multinational, multi-disciplinary collaboration.

Vietnam and other issues also have proved that the stakes of United States foreign policy are too critical to be allowed to rest on an uninformed United States citizenry. Higher education has a responsibility to promote greater comprehension of international issues and their implications by the United States public. The United States also must maintain a pool of competence on foreign areas. We must teach Chinese and Russian as well as German, French and Spanish. We must know about the social, economic and political dynamics of Ghana as well as those of the U.S.S.R. or of the countries of the Middle East. As a major industrial-technological power we must be involved in significant technical assistance and cooperative relationships around the world. No matter how we define our national interest, such widespread participation is essential to reducing the chances of violence and war.

In short, in training, research, the conduct of technical cooperation, diplomacy, business and many other fields, the United States cannot possibly survive in isolation. We have entered the irreversible era of interdependence and our

educational fare must reflect this reality. It is in this sense that we conceive of international education as an integral part of quality education, and not as an additive or a luxury which some can afford and others cannot.

The Responsibility of Our Colleges and Universities

The mandate that emerges for higher education is compelling. We urge that, irrespective of its student composition, size or location, each college and university consider seriously within its normal governance structure the following questions:

1. Does its current undergraduate curriculum reflect the implications of interdependence? Are the "international" and "intercultural" components of its curriculum an integral part of a total institutional plan, or an uneven and fragmented assortment of interests.
2. What ought to be the "international" role of the institution on campus and externally? What is the best way to examine and to plan such a role?
3. What is the status of its resources, human and material, in international studies? How can it strengthen these without additional funding? What is it that it must do that requires additional funding?
4. Has it considered curricular alternatives in such fields as area studies, inter-disciplinary and comparative studies, cross-cultural education, etc. . .? What is the potential of the outreach programs in the international areas?
5. Is it making full use of opportunities for faculty development? How can it develop other opportunities in this area? Does it have provision for visiting foreign students?
6. What is its policy on admission and training of foreign students? Is it making full use of their presence?
7. Is it making full use of opportunities for its students to study and to work in a foreign society?
8. Has it considered the possibility and value of inter-institutional cooperation and consortia arrangements both within and outside the United States in fulfilling its program objectives?
9. Has its Board of Trustees (or its equivalent) seriously considered the international role and responsibility of the institution? How about its State Commission on Higher Education? Its state legislators?
10. What is its policy in international education in relation to "continuing education" groups, the business community, the media, the government, and K to 12 public education?

Commitment

We strongly urge the commitment of higher education to institutionalizing international education. We recommend that each institution of higher learning examine, and plan, its international dimension and programs on and off the campus. We believe that this is a basic responsibility that higher education must meet at this juncture in history when it is imperative to ensure that future generations of graduates are aware of and able to cope with the dynamics of world interdependence. While the surface crisis in international education is partly financial, we are convinced that it is mostly a crisis of insufficient commitment based on lack of appreciation of the stakes involved. There is much that can be done with existing resources; there is much more that can be done in generating resources. We can learn from existing trends and experiences, but there is no substitute for the internal, institution-wide process of examining and planning the responsibility and potential role of the institution in international education. Above all, we call for the genuine commitment of the educational leadership and the support of other sectors of society to a mission that has as its ultimate objective not only quality education, but the single most important contribution to the survival of the human race.

AASCU is an organization of 320 regional state colleges and universities located in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands. Two-thirds of them have graduate programs. They represent the fastest-growing group of four-year institutions in the nation, with a total enrollment of 2 million--25 percent of the total of those in four-year institutions.

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